

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----160909Z 015516 /20
R 160815Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8154
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 VIENTIANE 0845

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: EAID PFOR PORG LA US
SUBJECT: LPDR POLICY REGARDING AID EXPERTS FROM CAPITALIST NATIONS

REF: A VIENTIANE 0803, B VIENTIANE 0025, C VIENTIANE 0840

SUMMARY: LPDR OFFICIALS REQUESTED US AND CANADIAN MENNONITE
RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES QUIT LAOS, CITING POLICY
DECISION. WHAT RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES OF NON-GOVERN-
MENTAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE NO LONGER WELCOMED IN LAOS.
LAO REFUSED TO APPROVE REPLACEMENT FOR DIRECTOR OF
CANADIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS OVERSEAS (CUSO) FOR SAME
REASON. US AND BRITISH QUAKER RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES FELT THEY
MAY BE NEXT TO BE ASKED TO LEAVE LPDR. LAO ALSO
REFUSED TO APPROVE CERTAIN AID EXPERTS SPONSORED BY
UNDP AND JAPANESE GOVERNMENT. REJECTION OF OTHER
WESTERN AID EXPERTS AND AMCIT MENNONITES AND QUAKERS
MAY REFLECT A BROADER POLICY TO REDUCE SIZE OF WESTERN
COMMUNITY AS WELL AS DISGRUNTLEMENT AT ABSENCE OF
US GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. END SUMMARY.

1. RESIDENT MENNONITES WHO ARE ADMINISTERING A
\$200,000 AID PROGRAM IN LPDR WERE ASKED MAY 11 TO
LEAVE LAOS WITHIN ONE MONTH BY A MINISTRY OF FOREIGN
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AFFAIRS OFFICIAL. AMCIT LINDA HIEBERT AND HER CANADIAN
HUSBAND MURRAY TOLD EMBOFF THAT SAME DAY THAT THE LAO
THANKED THEM VERY MUCH FOR THEIR AID AND MORAL SUPPORT
AS MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN PEACE MOVEMENT BUT THAT A
DECISION HAD "COME DOWN FROM THE TOP" THAT THE LPDR NO
LONGER WELCOMED RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES OF NON-
GOVERNMENTAL AID ORGANIZATIONS. THE HIEBERTS SAID THE

LAO WERE STILL EAGER FOR MENNONITE AID MONEY BUT REQUESTED THEY TURN CASH FUNDS OVER FOR GOVERNMENT CONTROL. THE COUPLE DOUBTED WHETHER MENNONITE SUPPORTED VEGETABLE AND ANIMAL FEED SEED PROJECTS COULD BE SUFFICIENTLY ESTABLISHED WITHIN SHORT ONE MONTH PERIOD TO ASSURE SUCCESSFUL CONTINUATION. OUDONE VORATANOUVONG, DIRECTOR OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC SECTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS DEPARTMENT IN THE MFA TOLD THE HIEBERTS THAT THEY COULD STILL MAKE VISITS TO THE LPDR FROM BANGKOK.

2. IN FEBRUARY LPDR OFFICIALS REFUSED TO APPROVE A REPLACEMENT FOR DEPARTING DIRECTOR OF CUSO, THUS TERMINATING ITS AID PROJECT IN LPDR AS OF APRIL 1977. CUSO DIRECTOR TOLD EMBOFF LYAT THE REASON THE LAO GAVE FOR THE DECISION WAS THAT THEY NO LONGER WANTED REPRESENTATIVES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS TO RESIDE IN COUNTRY. MENNONITES AND AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE (QUAKERS), THE ONLY TWO OTHER NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS WITH RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES, WERE TOLD AT THAT TIME THAT THIS RULING DID NOT APPLY TO THEM.

3. AFTER THE LAO REVERSED THIS POSITION FOR THE MENNONITES MAY 11, QUAKER REPRESENTATIVE AMCIT LOUIS KUBICKA AND HIS BRITISH CITIZEN WIFE ERYL CALLED ON OUDONE TO ASK IF THEY WOULD ALSO BE ASKED TO LEAVE LPDR. OUDONE SAID THAT A DECISION HAD NOT YET BEEN MADE ON THE QUAKERS. KUBICKA, WHO TUTORS VIETNAMESE DIPLOMATS IN ENGLISH, ASKED THEM IF THEY KNEW WHAT THE QUAKER

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STATUS WAS IN LAOS. APPARENTLY AFTER CHECKING WITH THE LAO, THE VIETNAMESE INDICATED TO THE QUAKERS THEY WOULD INDEED BE ASKED TO QUIT LAOS.

4. KUBICKA TOLD EMBOFF THAT, DESPITE THEIR CREDENTIALS AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AMERICAN PEACE MOVEMENT, THE QUAKERS HAD ENCOUNTERED DIFFICULTIES WORKING WITH LPDR OFFICIALS WHILE TRYING TO ESTABLISH AID PROJECTS. EARLIER IN KMAY THE LAO REFUSED TO APPROVE AN AMCIT EXPERT ALREADY CONTRACTED BY THE AMERICAN BASED QUAKERS. THE AMCIT EXPERT WAS HIRED TO SUPERVISE A \$200,000 JOINT QUAKER/NORWEGIAN AGRICULTURE MACHINE REPAIR PROJECT. OUDONE TOLD THE KUBICKAS THAT THE LPDR WOULD APPROVE A QUAKER EXPERT TO SUPERVISE THE PROJECT IF THEY WOULD FIND ONE OF NORWEGIAN NATIONALITY. WHEN THE QUAKERS TRIED TO PERSUADE OUDONE TO RECONSIDER THE AMCIT EXPERT, OUDONE REPORTEDLY GRUMBLED, "YOU ARE JUST LIKE USAID."

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R 160815Z MAY 77
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C O N F I D E N T I A L FINAL SECTION OF 2 VIENTIANE 0845

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5. OTHER AID DONORS TO LPDR ARE ALSO HAVING PROBLEMS GETTING APPROVAL FOR CERTAIN EXPERTS RECRUITED FOR THEIR PROJECTS. ACTING RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNDP TOLD EMBOFF MAY 11 THAT THE OFFICIAL LPDR POLICY ON APPROVING RESIDENT EXPERTS IS THAT KTHE LAO PREFER EXPERTS FROM COMMUNIST COUNTRIES BUT WOULD ACCEPT QUALIFIED EXPERTS FROM CAPITALIST NATIONS IF NO COMMUNISTS COULD BE RECRUITED.

ANOTHER UNDP OFFICIAL TOLD EMBOFF THAT PRIME MINISTER KAYSONE PHOMVIHANE HIMSELF MAKES THE FINAL DECISION ON APPROVING AID EXPERTS AND THAT IT CAN TAKE AS LONG AS SIX MONTHS. REF A REPORTED THAT \$133,150 BUDGETED IN 1977 FOR A UNDP LIVESTOCK FEED MILL PROJECT HAS BEEN HELD UP BECAUSE THE LAO HAVE REFUSED TO APPROVE AN ITALIAN EXPERT. THE LAO HAVE REQUESTED THE UNDP SEARCH FOR A BULGARIAN EXPERT INSTEAD. FAO EXPERT ALSO TOLD EMBOFF THAT ANOTHER UNDP/FAO HAVE REJECTED A QUALIFIED BELGIAN EXPERT AND HAVE REQUESTED THE UNDP/FAO TO LOOK FOR A PRC EXPERT. THE UNDP HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO FIND EITHER A QUALIFIED BULGARIAN OR CHINESE EXPERT.

6. JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY'S (JICA)
THA NGON AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT WAS TERMINATED
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BY THE LAO AS OF APRIL 1977. JAPANESE PROJECT DIRECTOR TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE LPDR HAD NOT EXTENDED APPROVAL FOR THE PROJECT'S CONTINUATION BECAUSE IT OBJECTED TO JAVING FIVE JAPANESE EXPERTS ASSIGNED TO THE PROJECT.

7. COMMENT: THE KUBICKAS INTERPRET THE LAO MOVE TO REMOVE THE MENNONITE AND POSSIBLY QUAKER REPRESENTATIVES AS AN EXPRESSION OF DISPLEASURE WITH US POLICY TOWARD LPDR (NOT PROVIDING AID). KUBICKA TOLD EMBOFF THAT LAO OFFICIALS AND THE VIENTNAMESE DIPLOMATS HAD CRITICIZED THE WOODCOCK COMMISSION'S FINAL REPORT TO HIM BECAUSE IT DID NOT DIRECTLY SUPPORT US GOVERNMENT AID TO LPDR. OUDONE REPORTEDLY FELT THAT BY MERELY ENCOURAGING FUNNELING OF US DOLLARS THROUGH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS THE US GOVERNMENT WAS SEEKING A CHEAP WAY OUT OF COMPENSATING THE LAO FOR EXTENSIVE WAR DAMAGES. OUDONE FURTHER TOLD KUBICKA THAT THE LPDR LEADERS WERE NOT CONVINCED THAT SIGNIFICANT US GOVERNMENT AID WOULD EVER BE FORTHCOMING. ERYL KUBICKA TOLD EMBOFF THAT CHEF DE CABINET OF THE MFA SOUBANH SRITHIRATH ALSO EXPRESSED THIS SKEPTICAL VIEW TO HER BEFORE THE WOODCOCK COMMISSION'S VISIT. THE KUBICKAS PERCEIVED THE LPDR MOVE TO REQUEST THE MENNONITES AND POSSIBLY THEMSELVES TO QUIT LAOS AS AN EXPRESSION OF ANTI-AMERICAN FEELING BORN OF A DEEPLY ROOTED ATTITUDE OF PESSIMISM AND DISTRUST. A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN LPDR MEDIA OF ANTI-AMERICAN NEWS ITEMS DURING PERIOD OF MAY 10 TO 13, REPORTED REF C, SUPPORTS THIS VIEW.

8. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE IN ADDITION THAT THE LPDR MOVE TO ASK THE MENNONITES TO LEAVE IS PART OF A BROADER POLICY TO TRIM THE WESTERN COMMUNITY RESIDENT IN LAOS. A HIGH RANKING LPDR OFFICIAL COMPLAINED TO KUBICKA THAT THEY BLAME THE LOW PUBLIC MORALE IN VIENTIANE IN PART ON THE DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCES OF A CONFIDENTIAL

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CRITICAL, GRUMBLING WESTERN COMMUNITY. (WE GATHER THTHAT SOVIETS AND VIETNAMESE IN VIENTIANE ARE DOING A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF GRUMBLING TOO.) WE BELIEVE THERE IS AN LPDR POLICY TO REPLACE EXPERTS FROM CAPITALIST NATIONS WITH COMMUNISTS TO AS GREAT AN EXTENT AS POSSIBLE AND THAT THIS POLICY FURTHER UNDERSCORES THE VIEW THAT COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY TAKES PRIORITY OVER ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN LPDR POLICY FORMATION.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: THAT DEPARTMENT PASS CINCPAC, DIA AND CIA.

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